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EARLY LODI ACADEMY

by Ralph Lea and Janice Roth

Lodi Academy & Normal School, 1917; looking west from Cherokee Lane. ▲

In March of 1905, seventeen Seventh-Day Adventists gathered in a small tent to worship God. This was the home of one of the families and located where the present Lawrence Park is situated. The Lodi Central Church was organized with Elder T. C. Watson as pastor.

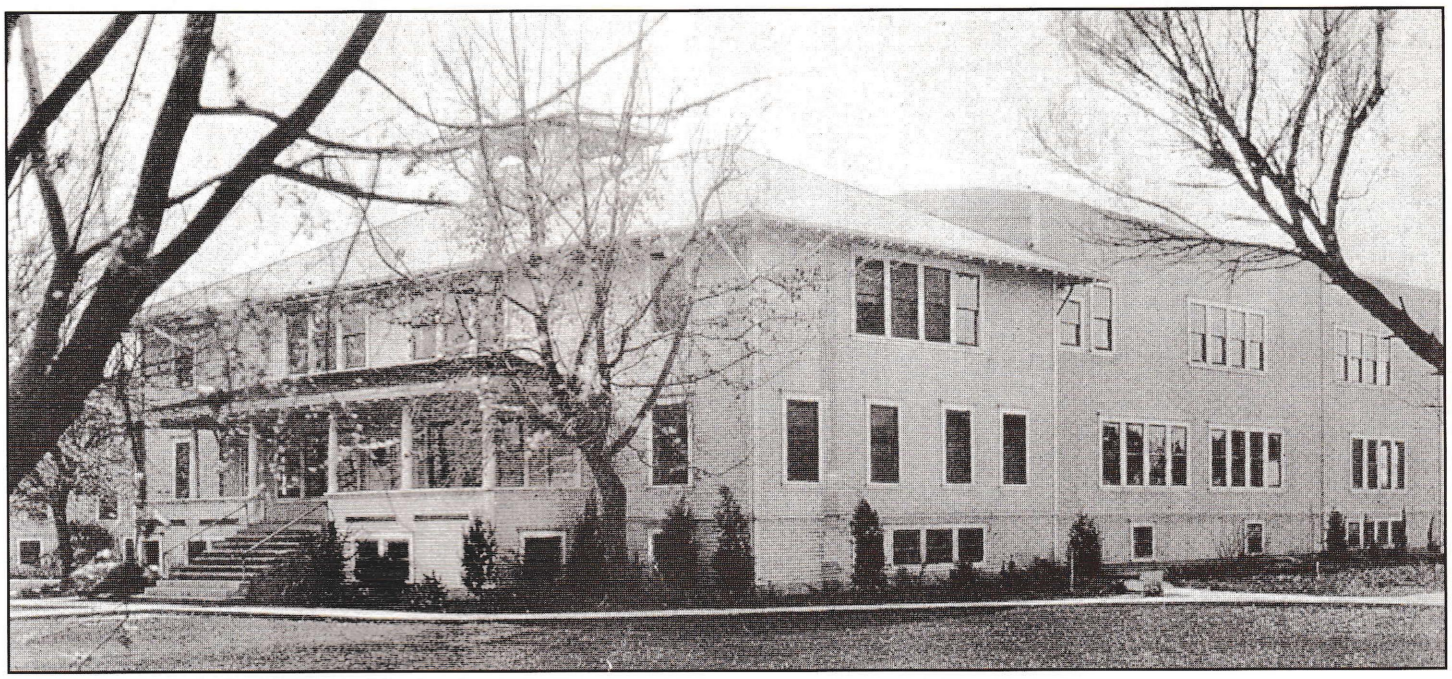
A month later the group moved into a small building at the corner of Stockton and Elm Streets which it shared with The Salvation Army. Soon many of The Salvation Army group joined the Adventists causing the Salvation Army leaders to padlock the door on Saturday.

Again the church met out of doors under a large eucalyptus tree until Mrs. Pine offered her home at 350 West Pine Street. Late in the summer the group decided to build a church together with the German speaking Adventists. It was located in the 500 block of East Lodi Avenue a few doors east of Garfield Street. In 1906, the church was dedicated with Elder D. T. Fero as pastor.

The membership grew and the German portion of the congregation built a church of their own on Hilborn Street. The Central Church added another room and in September of 1907 the first Seventh-Day Adventist Church School opened its doors here in Lodi.

The Adventists in California were acutely aware of the need for Christian Education and the need for qualified teachers for their schools. More normal schools, which were teacher training schools, were needed. The California Conference of the SDA had two colleges in California, one in Healdsburg and one in San Fernando already in operation and began to look for a third site, one that would be suitable for a normal school.

At the 37th Annual Session of the California Conference of SDA held in Fresno on January 31, 1908 it was resolved that a corporation be formed to establish the Pacific Normal Institute. A location search found that Lodi would be suitable. The Chamber of Commerce of Lodi pledged $9000.00 to the Conference to be used to acquire a building site and grounds for agriculture work. Three three-story mission style buildings were erected in 1908, an administration building,



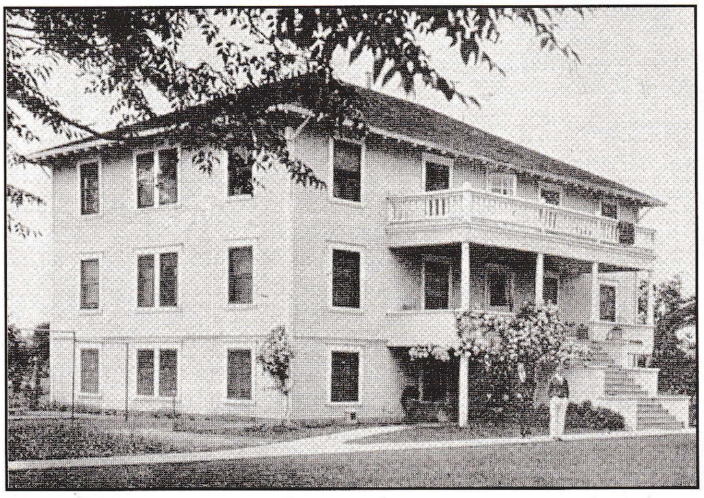
▲ *Lodi Academy administration building; built in 1908 and enlarged in 1927, adding 300 seats to the Chapel and added a library.*

▲ *Lodi Academy girls' dormitory.*

38x80 feet with a 38x52 wing; a girls dorm and a boys dorm each 45x50 feet. School opened that year of 1908 even though the boys dorm was not finished. In the following years more buildings were constructed including a barn, silo, shops, a normal building, and a cottage, which has served as a hospital, music studio and teachers residence over the years.

The Lodi Academy was founded in 1908, with the express purpose of preparing young people to take some active part in the missionary activities of the Seventh-Day Adventist Denomination. The institute was to cost over $20,000.00 and was located on twenty acres on the north side of Kettleman Lane between Cherokee Lane and Central Avenue. Twenty additional acres were added at a later date. Each summer large camp meetings were held on the grounds.

During 1908-09 the school was known as the Western Normal Institute. On July 10, 1910 the board with P. J. Wolfsen, chairman, decided that the school be called the Lodi Normal Academy with a church school course for the first eight grades, an academic course for the next four years and then a two year normal course for the training of church school teachers. By 1911 the name Normal Institute was used and from 1913-1923 it was called Lodi Academy. From 1923-1932 the name used was



▲ *Lodi Academy boys' dormitory.*

Lodi Academy and Normal and from 1932 to the present the name Lodi Academy returned. Normal classes were no longer held in Lodi but were available at Pacific Union College.

The girls dormitory, Sylvia Hall, was named for the wife of Principal Sharpe. The boys dormitory was named Elton Hall after Elton Sharpe, later it was called North Hall. The Announcement for Lodi Academy & Normal of 1926-27 states that each student will pay "$6.50 a month for a furnished room, heat, light, plain washing and ironing and bathroom privileges. Two 60 watt light globes will be furnished to each room during the year." Two students were in each room although some single rooms were available for $10.00. The dorms were considered to be the students' home and every home had chores that needed to be done. The school had a service charge of $10.00 a month for these services. Each student was required to work off this charge by helping in the preparation of meals, working in the laundry, dairy, bakery, garden and any other chores necessary to keep the school and dorm in good repair. The dorms were discontinued in 1967. Hazel Hansen Lombardi, who attended Lodi Academy & Normal from 1927-29 recollects helping 4 hours a week at chores for her service charge, after which she was paid 19 cents an hour for work done.

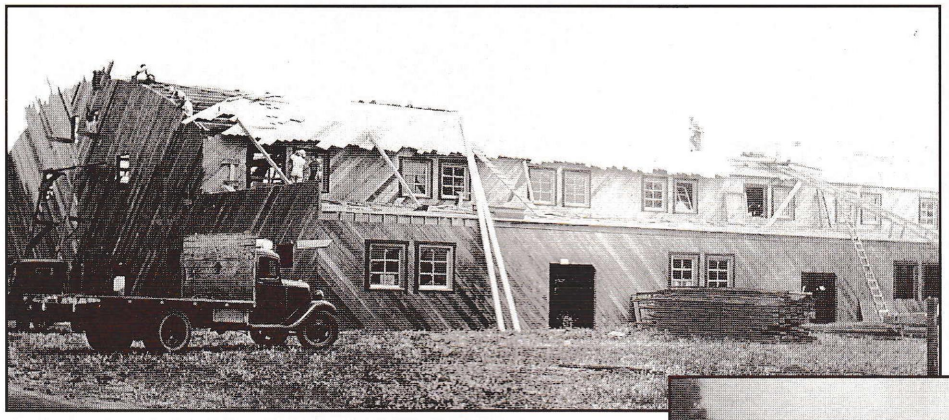
The 1926 school catalogue states "The girls will wear the regulation white middy with detachable blue collar and cuffs for fall and spring. During winter blue or red flannel middies are required. Outside of school hours the girls may exercise their own choice of wardrobe so long as it meets the stated requirements for neck, sleeves and weight of material." One day a month "free dress" (no uniform) was allowed. Skirts were to be no shorter than 13 inches from the floor and were often checked before the girls left the dorm. Each morning the girls gathered on the upper deck of the dorm for exercise at 6 a.m. followed by morning worship, breakfast and classes.

Lodi Academy, May 11, 1913. ▲

The older students were admonished to "set good examples by pleasant words and actions" for the younger students. On Friday the bells rang for Sabbath and rang again on Saturday evening at the close of Sabbath. Saturday Night Marches were often planned to be held in the gym. Boys and girls could march together but not touch. The rules prohibited smoking, drinking, late parties, unchaperoned automobile rides and unapproved motion picture shows.

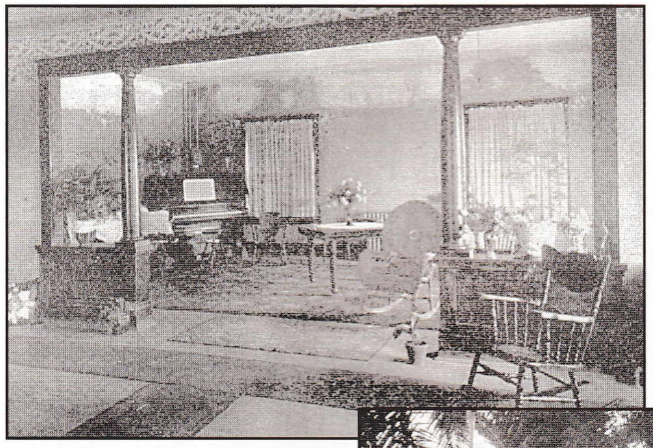
Courses of Study in 1927-28 totaled 4 units each year. First year courses were New Testament History, Composition, Physiology, Woodworking (for the boys), and Sewing (for the girls). Second year courses were Old Testament, History, Rhetoric, General History, General Science and Bookkeeping. Third year courses were Denomination History & Testimonies, Zoology & Botany, Agriculture (for the boys) and Domestic Science (for the girls)

Academic faculty of 1924 including Minnie Belle Scott Nary. ▲



◀ *Lodi Academy gym building, 1938.*

Lodi Academy; lots of help for the building that later became the Print Shop, among other uses. ▼



▲ *A parlor in Sylvia Hall, the girls' dorm.*

Lodi Academy fountain. ▶

▲ *Lodi Academy Carpentry and Wicker Industry, the finished product, 1920.*

and one elective chosen from Algebra, Language, Typewriting and Chemistry. Fourth year courses were Elementary Bible Doctrines, American History & American Government and two electives chosen from Literature, Geometry, Language and Physics.

The Normal Course included: First year classes with 32 units and consisted of Principles of Education, School Hygiene & School Management, Pedagogy, Child Study, Methods I, Observation, Teaching I & Teachers' Conference, Manual Arts I, Daniel & Revelation, and Teachers' Reviews. Second year classes with 32 units and consisted of Educational Psychology, Standards & Measurements, History of Education, Health Education, Methods II, Teaching II & Teachers Conference, Manuel Arts II and College Rhetoric.

By 1927 the Administration Building was remodeled to include the library and 300 new seats in the chapel

▲ *Lodi Academy Senior Class of 1926: Elle Allen, Wayne Bingham, Esther Compton, Francis England, Paul Henbach, Evelyn Haglund, Leslie Johnson, Dorothy Kellogg, Iola Kinser, Helen Little, George Meldrum, Edward Miller, John Miller, Theyl Michaelson, Israel Meckler, Marie Newhauser, Elsie Neufeld, Harriet Nott, Byron Olsen, Stella Putnam, J. Leslie Robinson, Bertha Sorensen, Otillia Tonn, Leta Temple, Ruth Rice, Martha Wagner and Dr. Maude Potts.*

▲ *Lodi Academy Band in front of Administration Building.*

Separate lines for boys and girls at Lodi Academy. ▲

▲ *The boys worked in the fields to provide hay for the dairy cattle on campus.*

◀ *All work and no play was not the motto. Many fun activities were a part of the school day.*

▲ *The chickens not only provided eggs for the students, but also the townspeople.*

▲ *Lodi Academy, 1948.*

for a capacity of 700. Serving as principal from 1926-1927 was V.V. Wolfkill. He emphasized the manual arts and believed that manual labor should be fundamental in the education of all students. Agricultural endeavors, including a dairy, orchards, and poultry, gave the students manual training while providing the necessities of daily living. Woodworking, metal work, general machine work, printing, basketry, reed work, sewing, cooking, baking and other domestic arts were all experienced by the students to better prepare them for their vocation. The school truly strived to live up to it's motto "The School that Trains for Service."

The Dairy and Creamery were the pride of the Academy and provided work for students as well as milk, cream and butter for the school as well as the residents of Lodi. The Bakery produce goodies for the students and townsfolk. Students also worked in the laundry. Washday began at five a.m. Sunday morning. Large washing machines were used and all washed clothes were hung on lines outside to dry. Sheets were mangled smooth, the boys shirts were ironed while the girls' clothes were delivered unironed.

Carpentry, basketry, wickerwork and reed work were taught producing many useful items and providing manual training for students. "Reed work was one of the essentials of the oldest education and held a prominent place in the arts of men. The basket in which Moses was found in the Nile was made on the same principle as that

▲ *In this class of 1940, the girls are still required to wear the white middies with blue collar and cuffs just as they did in 1908.*

Lodi Academy Band, circa 1948, in front of Administration Building. ▲

used in our course. Of all the worlds modern inventions baskets are made by hand as they were centuries ago," according to the 19th Annual Announcement of the Lodi Academy and Normal.

D.A. Ochs was principal from 1927-1931 when editor Edith Stoops published Volume 1 Number 1 of "The Gateway", the school newspaper on May 21, 1928. Lillian Dollinger Bunch, Homer Wolfsen and Arthur Steck were reporters, Paul Heubach was the business manager and Bob Nixon was Associate Editor.

H.E.Westermeyer was principal from 1931-1937 which included the year of the silver anniversary, 1933, when the normal department was discontinued and the school was again called the Lodi Academy. Elder Lowell Rasmussen of the Class of 1925 became principal from 1937 to 1941. During his dormitory days as a student he felt so homesick and lost that

Lodi Academy students welcoming new students, 1952-53. ▲

▲ *Lodi Academy singers, 1959.*

he wished the dorm would burn down. He "found himself" in college and enjoyed coming back to Lodi and later was head of the Educational Department for the General Conference.

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By 1938 over 750 students had graduated from the Lodi Academy of these there were 200 teachers, 75 nurses, 41 foreign missionaries, 32 Doctors and dentists, 20 ministers and 100 more in college and medical school.

It was during the eight years under principal E.F. Heim, 1941-1949, that the elementary school left the Academy campus for their new school, two blocks to the north, on Garfield Street. Other changes on campus included razing of the tank house, moving the principals' house to Central Avenue and new parking and lawn areas.

Music has always been a big part of the Academy students' lives. In the early years the band and orchestra performed at school and community programs. In 1927 piano lessons were offered at $4.00 a month for 4 lessons and practice pianos were rented for $1.00 a month for 1 hour daily.

By the 1940's the singing group at Lodi Academy had expanded with over half of the students in the choir and soon "The Lodian Singers" became the premier musical group in Lodi. They gave concerts for service clubs, churches, performed in Hawaii, throughout California and at Worlds' Fairs.

By 1967 the barns, silo and farm land were long gone. The old dormitories and the Administration Building had long been replaced with new school buildings and a gym, but the principle remains the same as that expressed by the Academy's early motto: "The School That Trains for Service" and its correlative "In for Training and Out to Serve".

REFERENCES & CREDITS

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